Air Pollution In Delhi

663. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi city is fast on its way to becoming one of the most polluted cities in the world as environmental issues continue to remain on the backburner;

(b) whether, according to the Centre for Science and Environment Statistics, 40 per cent of patients at AIIMS have breathing or heart problems and Delhi has more traffic on the roads than Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai put together; and

(c) if so, what steps Government are taking to keep the atmosphere of Delhi free from particles or pollutants and develop the air quality?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir. The ambient air quality monitoring in Delhi shows reduction in pollution levels. Lead has been reduced to about 60% and carbon monoxide has been reduced to 22% as compared to 1998. Other pollution parameters *viz.* suspended particular matter, oxides of Nitrogen and Sulphur have also shown decreasing trend.

(b) The vehicular population in Delhi is nore than the combined vehicular population of Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai. According to All India Institute of Medical Sciences, about 20-30% of patients are having respiratory and cardio-vascular ailments. However, no conclusive morbidity and mortality data could be established with relation to environmental pollution.

(c) The steps taken to control pollution in Delhi include the follwing:

(1) The Government has formulated a comprehensive Policy for Abatement of Pollution that lays stress on both the control and preventive aspects of pollution.

(2) The ambient air quality of Delhi is monitored regularly through

a network of monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme.

(3) Ambient air quality standards and emission standards for industrial units have been notified.

(4) Emissions from highly polluting industrial units and thermal power plants are regularly monitored and action is taken against the defaulting units.

(5) Unleaded petrol is now available throughout the country. Sulphur content in petrol/diesel also has been reduced.

(6) Gross emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for all categories of new vehicles have been notified under the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989. More stringent emission norms have also been notified.

(7) Fiscal incentives are provided for installation of CNG kits.

Extinction of Medicinal Plants

664. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the medicinal plants which are on the endangering list and the steps taken to protect them from extinction.;

(b) whether it is a fact that the task force of the Planning Commission, headed by its member Shri D.N. Tewari, has submitted a report on the subject; if so, the broad features thereof; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to encourage and conserve sustainable use of medicinal plants in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) has prepared a Red Data Book listing the threatened and endangered species of plants including medicinal plants. A list of 29 medicinal plants that are threatened or endangered have been included in the negative list for exports. The plants, plant portions, derivatives and extracts prepared out of these plants obtained from the wild are not allowed